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Bracher Collection

John H. Bracher to his half-brother, George Bracher. 13/11/1852

Chippenham, Wilts  
13 November 1852

My dear George,

Being at home a short time since I was gratified by a perusal of your last letter to Father, in which you mention that you are just about to weigh anchor and set sail for the Gold regions and I hope that you are now safely landed there and have almost made your fortune as well [as] the rest of the people who have gone to that quarter of the world. But although I was rather surprised at your having returned to your old quarters, Australia I must confess that there was one statement in your letter which did not surprise me and that was a remark touching my silence – and true enough your remark was - & I frankly confess that I stand convicted of great neglect in not having before written to you – however the old adage “better late than never” just recurs to mind and therefore I will act upon it – I have for a long time been thinking of writing to you – (but here I suppose I should hear you ejaculate if I were near enough to you, that my thoughts were not much good to you unless I committed them to paper as you are rather to [o] far off to hear me think)

In fact my dear brother, without mincing the matter I believe this letter should have been written in November 1851 instead of '52.

(2) I was glad to hear that you had given up your berth at Mauritius, as I had judged from the tenor of your former letters that “nigger-driving” was not in accordance with your feelings, indeed the man who could take delight in such a course must have rather a harder heart than I give you credit for – I presume that you are not going to the “diggings” but will pitch your tent at Sydney or some other notable place where you will doubtless soon obtain a good position and there will leave you for the present and tell you a little home news – and to begin with myself (altho’ by the bye this is not quite right) I must tell you that I have now been here for the last three years acting at present in the capacity of accountant at one of our best branches – but how long I shall continue to I don’t know but I want to get up a notch – Mama seems much as she has been for the last few years only perhaps not quite so strong – and certainly not so young.

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Fanny and her girl and two boys are all well and happy – altho’ the farmers have been kicking up a great fuss about free trade having taken the gilt off their ginger-bread – and are anxiously looking to see what parliament will do for them – but I don’t think that Lord Derby’s ministry will do them much good – neither will the farmers be much wronged if they don’t.

(3) Poor dear Emma is much as usual Nat is thinking about launching forth as an architect his apprenticeship being just about to terminate – eth is in the bank – a great chap topping all of us and just aspiring to be ranked among the six foot race –

The immense importation of gold from the “diggins” has caused much fear in commercial quarters as to the issue of such an influx of the precious metal – but I am inclined to think that taking into consideration the great increase in trade and manufacture together with the increase of population and the additional comforts and luxuries of the rising generation that not any great alteration in monetary affairs will be effected – True, money is now very plentiful and 1 and two percent is about the rate of interest and if you can get a good mortgage at four percent it is a very good thing – Fundholders & capitalists begin to look round rather suspiciously. Food of every kind is now cheap.

England has for the last two months been regretting the death of the Duke of Wellington who was gathered to his Father’s on the 14 of September and will be buried at the middle of this month & the funeral will of course be a grand one – in Austria, Russia, Prussia, Spain and Portugal are going to (4) send some of their military men to swell the funeral cortege which will be about 2 miles in extent, his remains will rest in St Paul’s beside those of Nelson – you would find a vast alteration in old England were you to return – the advances made within the last few years in the Arts and Sciences is truly astonishing – Railways now intersect every portion of the island and Telegraphs are laid by almost every line and not content with conveying messages over land and water the electric wire is now passed under the rolling billows from this country to France , and the two capitals are now within ‘conversational’ distance. Ballooning too is now carried to such an extent

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that gentlemen are now taking their aerial flights in “carriage and pair” – but I believe this trick will be stopped as it is such an exalted pain to the poor quadrupeds who have been more used to carrying than being carried.

The papal aggression I need not touch upon as you have no doubt seen accounts in the papers of the impudence of Father Pope in meteing (*sic*) out and ..... fairy land and declaring himself whole & sole governor – but we soon told the old chap he “could not lodge here” – and although his “Cardinal of Westminster” may be seen parading our streets with his red stockings we do not hear much about his holiness – but I am afraid that they are secretly working together to get us once more under the Pope’s toe – but what is worse than the open attack (5) <sup>across p1</sup> of these romanists is the romanising tendencies of our own Clergyman in the Church of England who are now making a great stir and trying to get all ecclesiastical government into their own hands – and I hear that if such were permitted we should find that the Church of England and the Church of Rome were the same.

However there are many protestant hearts in existence yet and I hope that it may please God to preserve us from the darkness of popery and give us abundantly to enjoy the blessings of the gospel and here my dear George I would express the pleasure I felt at perusing your last letter to me, in which you so earnestly exhort me to “follow on to know the Lord” – and I hope I may say that such is my desire and endeavour and it is a gratification to me to think that though the great distance which separates us and the many casualties which surround us in this evil world may prevent our meeting <sup>[across p2]</sup> on this side of the grave –I say it is a pleasure to think that we may meet in a better place where the parting word shall pass our lips no more - judging

from your letters to me I cannot but think that in the various changes which you have gone through – the word of the blessed gospel and the Holy Spirit pressing them home to you has often been a great comfort when you have had misfortunes to deal with – that the blessing of God may richly descend upon you and yours and all dear to us is the sincere wish of my heart –

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I shall be very glad to hear from you when you have time to favour me – altho I feel that my neglect has made me unworthy of an early reply from you – I hope that your wife and little ones are all well – I wish you to remember me most kindly to them and give dear little Fanny a kiss or two for me – and tell her I hope to see her some day – but my holidays are too short to allow of the trip at present – I believe it is now your summer – I wish it was ours too – for I have a large garden in which I take much pleasure and this damp weather will not suit at all – but I must I think tell you the garden is at my lodgings or you will get thinking that I have taken to myself a wife and settled down – Oh, no – no such good luck – but I am an unfortunate batchelor on a small salary screwed up “in” two rooms – in fact if things don’t improve in this part of the world I must cut it and go to the “diggings” myself but don’t expect me till you see me!!!! For Uncle Bracher is now living near Andover and amusing himself with a little farming – and Cousin Mary is living in Devonshire – her health is not very good – Grandfather is still pretty jolly and considering he has passed his 78<sup>th</sup> year I think he is looking remarkably well – and takes as much interest in the affairs about him – not forgetting a little politics – as many who are younger.

I have now almost filled my sheet and must draw it to a close – though I seem to have said little that will be interesting to you –

December 12. I had written thus far a month ago but could not get your address in time for the last vessel – but although a month has elapsed since my pen touched this paper I do not think of any more to add – but the poor old Duke of Wellington was buried and a most gorgeous funeral it was costing the country the sum of Eighty Thousand pounds which you will say was no small sum for one days show – I hope when I have the pleasure of receiving a letter from you it will give me a few particulars about the gold reions, etc. With love to yourself & little one and kind remembrances to my sister unknown believe me your affectionate brother

J.H. Bracher

Transcribed H.M. Wilson 14/11/1988